

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: December 2, 2008

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 18: Consideration of resolution re-authorizing Cooperative Management Agreement with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for operation and management of the Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve (former Ahmanson Ranch), for a five year term, unincorporated Ventura County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution recommending extending for a five year term the Non-Exclusive License Agreement with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) for the management and operation of the Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve.

Legislative Authority: Section 33203 of the Public Resources Code; Section 33211.5(d)(2) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The original Non-Exclusive License Agreement came into effect November 2003 as a condition of the Conservancy's acquisition of the nearly 3000-acre Ahmanson Ranch from Washington Mutual Bank. The state Department of General Services (DGS) required that the Conservancy enter into a license agreement with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for operation and management of the property to ensure that no liability or costs would befall the state. The attached document was prepared by DGS, pursuant to the Ahmanson Ranch Property Acquisition Agreement and Joint Escrow Instructions dated October 18, 2003.

Since MRCA already operates and manages all Conservancy land in addition to its own parklands, this license agreement is a formality specific to the former Ahmanson property. Extending the term of the agreement for another five years to November 2013 formally authorizes the continuation of the MRCA's essential services, which makes possible the management of the park for resource protection (including sensitive and endangered species protection), public access, interpretive programs, trails, and special projects consistent with the license agreement and the park's resource management plan.